

Maidstone Borough Council

Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday 13th December 2010

Review of Maidstone Market

Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2007-08 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Council's Market. Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered reviewing Maidstone Market as part of its work programme for 2010-11, it was agreed that an update on the review would be provided for scrutiny to consider.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to interview the Officers with regard to the progress that has been made on the priorities within the Leisure and Prosperity portfolio, and future possibilities to improve Maidstone Market and make recommendations as appropriate.
- 2.2 Areas of questioning could include but are not limited to:
- Whether cheaper '£1 shops' have made trading harder for the market, if so, could the Council help tackle this.
 - Would the provision of a fish market be received well, should facilities allow.
 - Have any international sellers shown an interest in stalls at the market.
 - Would another location be more suitable for both traders and buyers e.g a permanent indoor facility.

3. Maidstone Market Update

- 3.1 On 24 August 2010 Councillor Denise Joy and Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture Councillor Richard Ash, visited the Maidstone Market to ascertain the progress it has made since its review in 2008. The scrutiny recommendations were discussed and the results are attached at **Appendix A**.

As part of the recommendation 'That the Committee's support for the part-pedestrianisation of the Lower High Street be conveyed to Town Centre Management' a working group was organised by the Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Louise Smith. This was held on Friday 25 April 2008 and interviews were held with; John Foster -Economic Development Manager, the Streetscene sub-group of

Town Centre Management, Wendy Hegley - Arts Development, Malcolm Spalding - Arriva and Norman Kemp - Nu-Venture bus companies, Denis Conyan -Chairman of the local Hackney Carriage Association, and Peter Rosevear - Kent Highways Services. The minutes of the meeting are attached at **Appendix B**.

The free shuttle bus on Tuesdays in connection with Arriva has been received well, with a regular timetable for this route from the Bus Station. This is attached at **Appendix C**.

The promotion of the market is being looked into as funding restricts opportunities. However, signs will be displayed in car parks by the pay machine and limited local signs directing pedestrians and vehicles are displayed. An example of the advert on a council vehicle in the town centre is shown in **Appendix D**, as well as current signage at **Appendix E**.

4. Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 4.1 The Strategic Plan 2009-12 states that the Council wants Maidstone to be "a place with efficient and effective public services".